



Highlights ...

- PLEs provided on or after 10/01/08 that comply with current policy should be billed at the increased rate of \$270. See the article on this page for more information
- Gateway District TOTS testing started October 1, 2008.
- Providers: keep working your mismatches. See page 2 for details.
- Don't forget assessment training. See page 2 for details.

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WEEKLY UPDATE

October 3, 2008

TOTS UPDATE

We met this week with providers and service coordinators in the Barren River District to get feedback from them on their first month of TOTS testing.

Users in Barren River have been diligent about their work in TOTS and this has resulted in the identification and correction of system bugs as well as recommend-

ations for streamlined program procedures and data entry.

The Gateway District began TOTS testing on October 1st and will continue testing through October 31st.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

NEW POLICIES TOOK EFFECT OCTOBER 1ST

New Evaluation, Assessment and IFSP Development policies took effect on Wednesday (October 1st). The policies remain located on the homepage of the First Steps website for review, but will be moved to the Policies and Procedures Manual and Regulations section of the website next week.

Specific information regarding the policies and a Q and A regarding implementation can be found in the September 19th and September 26th weekly newsletters—also on the First Steps website.

Emergency regulation changes to accommodate the increased rate for Pri-

mary Level Evaluation were initiated. However, at the time of the typing of this newsletter, have not been filed. Therefore, while we are making every attempt to assure that the increased rate applies to all PLEs completed on or after October 1, 2008, it may need to be postponed.

PLE providers are encouraged to bill for PLEs provided on or after October 1, 2008 that, per policy, include the provision of a Cabinet-approved criterion referenced assessment instrument, at the increased rate of \$270. No changes to billing codes need to be made.

KEEP WORKING YOUR MISMATCH REPORTS

Last week's newsletter strongly encouraged providers to start working their mismatch reports in anticipation of the conversion from CBIS to TOTS. Providers listened! Betsy and Lisa's phones have been ringing off the hook this week.

This is just a reminder to those folks who haven't yet done so, don't wait. Start working your outstanding mismatch reports now.



REMINDER ...

The deadline for documenting training on one of the Cabinet-approved criterion referenced assessment instruments was September 30, 2008. Central Office is currently reviewing provider files to determine where documentation exists and where it might be

lacking. If you have not completed your assessment training or you have not submitted documentation of training obtained outside First Steps, please do so ASAP. Limited additional training opportunities have been made available. Register on TRAIN.

THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN WORKING POOR AND OTHER FAMILIES: 1997 AND 2004

Source: Child Trends—September 30, 2008

When the welfare system was reformed in 1996, there was concern that increased work efforts by single mothers might lead to deterioration in child outcomes, because mothers would have less time to spend with their children. However, a new Child Trends analysis, entitled *The Well-Being of Children in Working Poor and Other Families: 1997 and 2004*, finds better child

outcomes in working poor families than in non-working poor families. The research brief is available at:

http://www.childtrends.org/docdisp_page.cfm?LID=D51F42B7-B3DF-400C-ABE74BFF26803B89



Upcoming Events

- 10/07/08 Child Evaluator Videoconference
- 10/09/08 Kentucky Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting in Frankfort
- 10/22/08 Carolina Curriculum Training in West Liberty—Course ID 1014790
- 10/22/08 Carolina Curriculum Training in Paducah—Course ID 1014775
- 10/23/08 POE Quarterly Meeting
- 10/29/08 HELP Training in West Liberty—Course ID 1014791

Visit the First Steps website at

fs.chfs.ky.gov



FIRST STEPS
KENTUCKY'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM



Highlights ...

- TOTS will include an Evaluation/Assessment report feature.
- Needs Assessment results are in—including the winning slogan.
- Registration for more Assessment Training now available on TRAIN

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WEEKLY UPDATE

October 10, 2008

TOTS UPDATE

Primary Level Evaluation providers and other assessment providers may be interested to know that TOTS is being designed to include an Evaluation/Assessment report feature.

The Evaluation/Assessment report will pull information from the Demographic screen, the Pregnancy, Birth and Health Information screen, and the Evaluation/Assessment screen into a single, comprehensive report.

All contributors to the report (and their contributions) will be identified within the report.

Primary Level Evaluators will

have more than 40,000 characters worth of space to complete their PLE documentation and other specialty assessors will have more than 8,000 characters worth of space.

The Evaluation/Assessment report is designed to streamline the First Steps reporting process for families by including all evaluation and assessment information in one convenient report.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

2008 REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The 2008 Regional Needs Assessment is complete. There were 312 responses this year. Admittedly we were expecting a much larger response rate. Efforts were made to inform all providers of the opportunity to share feedback with First Steps' administration. Post cards were mailed to all providers and announcements were included with weekly

newsletters.

Last year 341 responses were received. First Steps is a system of nearly 1800 providers and we hope the needs assessment will begin to grow and serve as a valuable source of feedback for all the hard working professionals in the system.

Some providers expressed concern that they could be
(Continued on Page 3)

ASSESSMENT TRAINING REGISTRATION ON TRAIN

<https://ky.train.org>



10.20.08	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)-1015044 in Hazard
10.22.08	Carolina Curriculum— 1014790 in West Liberty
10.22.08	Carolina Curriculum—1014775 in Paducah
11.06.08	AEPS—1014776 in Somerset
11.10.08	Carolina Curriculum—1014972 in West Liberty
11.20.08	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)- 1014974 in West Liberty
12.03.08	Carolina Curriculum—1014973 in West Liberty
12.10.08	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)- 1015046 in London
12.17.08	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)- 1014975 in West Liberty

This is not a comprehensive list of assessment training. It reflects only the dates which have been confirmed. Additional assessment training dates will be added as they become available.

TOTS training for Service Coordinators who were unable to attend one of the previous sessions will be added for a date in November. This announcement will be included in the newsletter when it is confirmed.

NOTES FROM CBIS ...

For any of you who are not signed up for the Google Groups, please sign up for that service. You can do so via the CBIS web site: <http://cbis.louisville.edu> You will receive alerts about CIMS or CBIS through this messaging system, and you can also access past mes-

sages that you can reference if you run into a problem. CBIS/CIMS problems can still be e-mailed to Kimberly at: cbis@louisville.edu for the time being. However, a good first stop for questions is Central Office. You can reach Lisa or Betsy at 877-41STEPS.

identified if they responded. Everyone should be reassured that the responses are anonymous. Hopefully we can do a better job next year of making sure everyone knows this. Some comments suggested that Central Office, the administrative body of the First Steps program, would not take the responses to the survey into consideration when making programmatic decisions. Please be assured that Central Office is greatly interested in your responses and will take your feedback into consideration in matters that impact the program to the fullest extent possible.

An exciting feature of this year's needs assessment was the slogan contest. Thank you to everyone who submitted ideas for the slogan and congratulations to those of you whose ideas were included in the survey. There was a clear winner; HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP AND SUCCEED...ONE STEP AT A TIME, which received over 50% of the vote.

Congratulations to Lori Clements for submitting it!!!

Please take a moment to review the summary of responses at the link below.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=k0_2bnn3MU7T1b_2bMBmD578cAD_SR_2b2j_2fmv_2f4kKAqOXTDA4_3d

RECENT REPORTS FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY

As many First Steps providers are aware, more than 50% of the children served by First Steps are Medicaid eligible. Here are some recent reports about the impact of poverty on young children.

Source: National Center for children in Poverty—Retrieved October 10, 2008

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) has recently published the following reports:

- Basic Facts about Low-Income Children Birth to Age 3: Fact Sheet (October 2008), by Ayana Douglas-Hall and Michelle Chau:

http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_849.html

- Basic Facts about Low-Income Children Birth to Age 6: Fact Sheet (October 8, 2008), by Ayana Douglas-Hall and Michelle Chau

http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_847.html

- Who are America's Poor Children? The Official Story (October 2008), by Sarah Fass and Nancy K. Cauthen

http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_843.html

Upcoming Events

See Page 2 for training opportunities and visit <https://ky.train.org>

10.23.08 POE Quarterly Meeting Videoconference

12.01.08 OSEP Data Verification Visit to Kentucky

Visit the First Steps website at

fs.chfs.ky.gov





Highlights ...

- Register for and attend a TOTS Training now. Failure to attend a TOTS Training will affect your ability to bill for First Steps services when TOTS goes live. See the TOTS Update on this page for more information.
- Confused about Evaluation and/or Assessment report timelines? You're not alone. See the article starting on this page.
- Interested in becoming IECE certified at little to no cost? See the article on page 3.
- Do not send Record Review documentation to Scott Tomchek's attention—see the article on page 3 for more information.

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WEEKLY UPDATE

October 17, 2008

TOTS UPDATE

Thanks to all who have registered and attended a TOTS training in their area. If you have not attended a training yet, register now (www.train.org).

When the First Steps program transitions to the TOTS system in the next couple of months, **ALL billing will be done through TOTS**. Providers will no longer be able to submit paper claims or excel files for payment.

It is critical that First Steps providers, service coordinators, administrators and other administrative staff (as needed) attend a TOTS training in order to familiarize themselves with the TOTS system and obtain a user

name and password. Your username and password will permit you access to the system and will allow you or your agency to bill for the services you provide.

If you have attended a TOTS training and you are experiencing any difficulty with your username and password, contact your regional Technical Assistance Team, or e-mail Central Office at chfs.firststeps@ky.gov to address the issue.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT REPORT TIMELINES

There is a lot of justified confusion out there regarding timelines for submitting Evaluation and/or Assessment reports. Here's the scoop:

Per the Evaluation policies posted on the First Steps website (fs.chfs.ky.gov), the Evaluation report and notification of need for further evaluation need to be made

available to the IFSP team within ten (10) calendar days of the provider receiving the complete referral for evaluation.

The timeline of 10 calendar days referenced here was shortened from 14 calendar days in response to multiple stakeholder meetings con-

(Continued on Page 2)

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ducted last year. Those meetings identified a need to reduce the timeframe between the referral for evaluation and receipt of the evaluation report in order to assist initial service coordinators in meeting the 45 day timeline for IFSP development.

The starting point of the 10 day timeline (the date the provider received the complete referral for evaluation) is not inconsistent with current regulation. However, the timeline itself currently is, as current regulation still references 14 calendar days.

The 14 calendar day timeline is one of a number of regulation changes Central Office is preparing to propose in an effort to align regulations and policies in a way that supports timely customer service and federal compliance. The timeline for submitting Assessment reports in policy is consistent with the timeline in regulation: within ten (10) working days of the provider receiving the complete written referral for assessment.

It has been brought to the attention of Central Office, however, that allowing assessors 10 working days, while only allowing PLEs 10 calendar days is unfair and defeats the purpose of trying to reduce the timeline when both may be contributing information to the IFSP.

Central Office has taken this into consideration and will likely include a change from “working” to “calendar” days

when changes to 911 KAR 2:130 Kentucky Early Intervention Assessment and Service Planning are proposed.

So what do you do in the meantime?

Because of our continued effort to reduce the waiting period for families from the date of referral to the development of the IFSP, Central Office strongly encourages Primary Level Evaluators and assessors to complete their reports and make them available to the IFSP team as soon as possible following the evaluation or assessment.

Primary Level Evaluators will not be cited for noncompliance if a PLE report is made available to the IFSP team more than 10 calendar days from the date the complete referral for evaluation was received, but equal to or less than 14 calendar days from the date the complete referral for evaluation was received until such time as the proposed changes to the administrative regulation are approved.

Assessors should comply with current policy and regulation, which requires the report to be made available to the IFSP team within 10 working days of the receipt of the complete referral for assessment.

If you have further questions regarding this matter, please contact your regional Technical Assistance Team (TAT), or e-mail Central Office at chfs.firststeps@ky.gov.

ARE YOU SEEKING IECE CERTIFICATION?

Project INCREAS (Increasing the Number, Competence, and Resources of Early Interventionists in Areas of Shortage) is continuing to accept applicants to participate in the next cohort which will start in the spring of 2009! Project INCREAS will provide tuition support to qualified providers who are interested in obtaining their IECE (interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education) Certification.

If you (1) plan to provide developmental intervention through First Steps, (2) have a bachelors degree, (3) do not have IECE certification, and (4) intend to remain a provider in the First Steps system, this is an outstanding opportunity to not only gain certification, but network and collaborate with

other professionals in the field of early intervention.

Scholars who are selected for funding will be able to complete the IECE certification program through two years of part time study, with continued funding contingent upon successful performance in the program. Project INCREAS coursework will be delivered almost exclusively through distance education formats, with many opportunities to complete practicum coursework within your current responsibilities.

If you have additional questions or would like an application for funding, please contact Julie Rutland at : julie.rutland@uky.edu.



NOTICE REGARDING RECORD REVIEW

The September 19th newsletter alerted readers to the movement of Theresa James from the Record Review Team at the Weisskopf Child Evaluation Center to CBIS to assist with the transition to TOTS. Since that time, the Record Review Team at Weisskopf is reporting that mail and faxes are being mailed to the direct attention of Scott Tomchek. Unfortunately, this has caused a significant delay in the processing of these materials. All RecordReview Materials

being sent to the Weisskopf Center should be mailed or faxed to the address/phone number on forms RF-16, RF-17 or RF-18 and should be directed to the attention of the RECORD REVIEW COMMITTEE.

The address and fax number are:

Weisskopf Child Evaluation Center
University of Louisville—HSC
Attn: Record Review Committee
571 S. Floyd St., Ste. 100
Louisville, KY 40202
FAX: 502-852-0434

Upcoming Events

- 10.20.08 HELP Training in Hazard—1015044
- 10.22.08 Carolina Curriculum Training in West Liberty—1014790
- 10.22.08 Carolina Curriculum Training in Paducah—1014775
- 10.23.08 POE Quarterly Meeting Videoconference
- 11.06.08 AEPS Training in Somerset—1014776
- 11.10.08 Carolina Curriculum Training in Berea—Course ID 1015131 (open for registration on Monday)
- 11.10.08 Caroline Curriculum Training in West Liberty—1014972
- 11.20.08 HELP Training in West Liberty—1014974
- 12.01.08 OSEP Data Verification Visit to Kentucky
- 12.03.08 Carolina Curriculum Training in West Liberty—1014973
- 12.10.08 HELP Training in London—1015046
- 12.17.08 HELP Training in West Liberty—1014975

Register for all First Steps trainings on TRAIN at www.train.org.

Visit the First Steps website at

fs.chfs.ky.gov



Highlights ...

- Register for and attend a TOTS Training now. Failure to attend a TOTS Training will affect your ability to bill for First Steps services when TOTS goes live. See the TOTS Update beginning on this page for more information.
- Tips for more efficiently addressing claims resubmissions begin on this page.
- See the Training Notice re New Service Provider Orientations on Page 2

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WEEKLY UPDATE

October 24, 2008

TOTS UPDATE

Last week we spent some time talking about the importance of getting to a TOTS training. There are still a couple left before 10/31/08. When you attend TOTS Training, you will be given your TOTS Username and Password. Your Username and Password will be required for access to the TOTS system and processing of **ALL** First Steps claims.

As a reminder to new readers, TOTS is a web-based data management and claims processing system that will ultimately take the place of most of your hard-copy record as well as most

of the activities currently carried out by CBIS.

A statewide roll-out of the TOTS system is being planned for approximately mid-December, so it is very important for service coordinators and providers to get to a TOTS training, learn about the system and reflect on what will need to change in their current practice to assure timely reimbursement for services.



KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL RESUBMISSIONS

(Continued on Page 2)

Folks really listened when we said clear up your mismatches now. Central Office staff are spending a lot of time working through issues that providers have been unsuccessful in resolving for months. This is great for us and I'm sure, great for you.

As we work with providers to address mismatches, we are finding that often times providers simply resubmit all

claims that have been denied. This practice, more often than not, does not resolve the underlying problem. For example, in many cases the underlying problem is that the Summary Sheet authorizing the services has yet to arrive at Central Office for data entry. When it does, and it's entered, the provider's claim will be automatically flagged

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL RESUBMISSIONS (CONT'D)

(Continued from Page 1)
for payment.

So, how should a provider best approach this situation? Betsy Kennedy and Lisa Dorman, who are providing the bulk of customer service related to billing issues, have asked for providers to

1. Review the claim and determine whether there was indeed an error with the submission.
2. If there was an error with the submission, resubmit the claim and include what specifically is being changed and why.

3. If there does not appear to be an error with the claim, please contact Central Office at 877-41STEPS (877-417-8377) to identify the reason for denial before resubmitting the claim.

This process should serve to eliminate some of the paper being mailed and faxed back and forth between providers and Central Office and should help Central Office to resolve provider claims issues more efficiently.

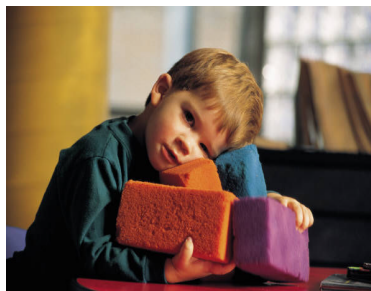


TRAINING NOTICE

In order to incorporate TOTS into system training, we will not be offering New Service Provider Orientations in the months of November or December.

We will offer the November Service Coordination as scheduled.

To register for any First Steps training, please visit www.TRAIN.org.



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 11.06.08 | AEPS Training in Somerset—1014776 |
| 11.10.08 | Carolina Curriculum Training in Berea—Course ID 1015131 (open for registration on Monday) |
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Register for all First Steps trainings on TRAIN at www.train.org.

Visit the First Steps website at

fs.chfs.ky.gov



Highlights ...

- TOTS Training wraps up today! Contact your TAT ASAP if you missed all of the 105 TOTS trainings provided since August.
- Inaccurate financial information causes First Steps to lose reimbursement. Check out the article on this page for more details.
- See the Training Notice re New Service Provider Orientations on Page 2

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WEEKLY UPDATE

October 31, 2008

TOTS UPDATE

Today marks the last official TOTS training in preparation for statewide implementation. Service coordinators, providers and agency administrators who have attended TOTS training and have a username and password are encouraged to visit or continue to visit and review the test system.

If you attended TOTS training early on and have since lost your username or password, or if you are unsure what your username and/or password are, please contact Central Office at 877-41STEPS or by e-mail at chfs.firststeps@ky.gov. The TOTS system is in its

final stages of development. Pilot testing of all user functions is well under way.

Providers who have not yet attended a TOTS training should contact their regional Technical Assistance Team immediately in order to discuss options for TA. Providers who have not attended TOTS training and do not have a username and password will NOT be able to bill for services following TOTS implementation.



Technology-assisted Observation and Teaming Support system

INSURANCE AND MEDICAID INFORMATION IN CBIS/CIMS AND TOTS

As service coordinators enter children into CIMS and when service coordinators enter children into TOTS, it is very important that the child and family's financial information be accurate. Often when Central Office staff review remittance advices from Medicaid and denials from insurance, it is

found that claims are denied because basic information, like Medicaid ID numbers and provider NPI numbers are incorrect.

As we work to maximize resources in First Steps, it is more important that every to assure that financial and billing information is correct. Thank you for your help.

FIRE MARSHALL OFFERS HALLOWEEN FIRE SAFETY TIPS

PRESS RELEASE DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2008

Halloween is a fun time for little ghosts and goblins. Parents of the little trick or treaters can make sure that Halloween is a safe, enjoyable evening by taking a few basic steps, according to William Swope, Kentucky State Fire Marshall.

"A little planning can go a long way toward making sure that your child has a 'fire-safe' holiday," Swope said.

The planning begins with buying the Halloween costume. Check the labels to make sure your little one's costume, wig or prop is fire resistant or flame retardant. When creating a costume,

choose material that doesn't ignite easily.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers these additional tips for the big night:

- Provide your child with a lightweight flashlight to carry around.
- Keep dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper away from heat sources, including light bulbs and heaters.
- Use lights instead of candles or torch lights to decorate sidewalks and yards.

More Halloween safety tips are available at the NFPA website:

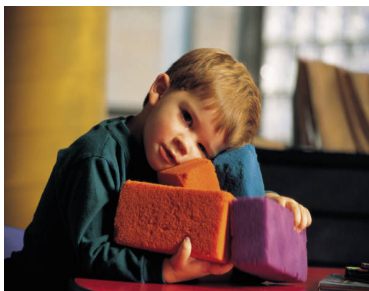
[Http://www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) .

TRAINING NOTICE

In order to incorporate TOTS into system training, we will not be offering New Service Provider Orientations/online module in the months of November or December.

We will offer the November Service Coordination Training as scheduled.

To register for any First Steps training, please visit www.TRAIN.org .



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- | | |
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